

night, sleeping on the bare ground with a couple of brick bats for pillows.

It needed but a few steps next morning to show me that Nature's machinery had run down during the twelve months of close confinement, and semi-starvation, and I was as feeble as a child.

The rain sodden landscape, through which we were slowly making our way, was desolate in the extreme. Happily I met Dr. V. M. Palmer, of Rutherford, himself returning from prison, who knew and loved my father, and he at once took me in charge, and gave me such assistance as was possible.

The Charlotte and Rutherford Railway had shared Stoneman's torch, and was utterly broken up. The long bridge over the Catawba was gone; and that stream ordinarily an hundred or more yards in width was now swollen by heavy rains until the bottoms seemed a sea of turbid yellow water.

The main current was an ugly sight of itself; having that strong swift sweep, which bespeaks the powerlessness of man as compared with Nature's strength. Twenty or thirty returning soldiers were collected on the hill-tops watching the stream; but fearing to attempt the passage, as there were only a couple of small canoes or "dugouts"—i. e.—logs hewed into boatshape and hollowed out like a trough.

They were hardly large enough for eight men to sit in, Indian file, one behind another; hence were very liable to turn over in an angry seething current.

However, it was that or stay on the river bank for an indefinite time.

The first party shot out into the stream like an arrow, and had nearly gotten over when a sudden lurch hurled them all into the tawny flood.

Fearful screams went up from stream and shore. Three men were engulfed like lead! One poor fellow clutched at the blackened pier of the railway bridge and shrieked for help. But it was only for an instant. Before those on shore could reach the spot to which we rushed—he had vanished forever.